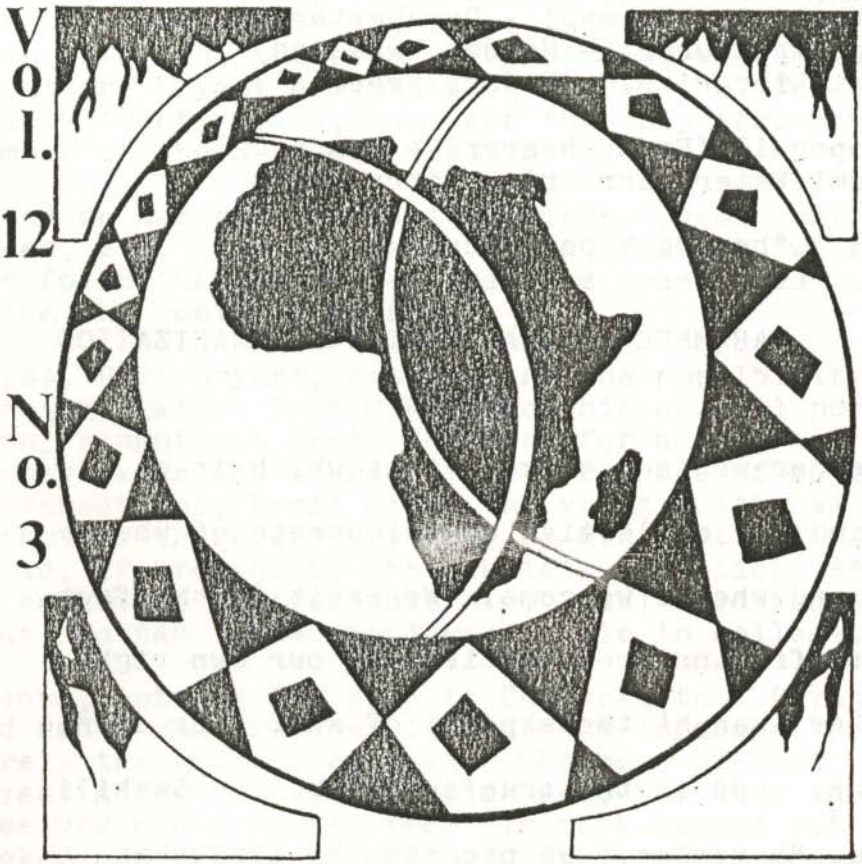
HARAMBEE

FLAME



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HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

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*honorary position

HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CREED

Together we seek to know that which is us, to expand our collective consciousness of who we are and whence we come. We exalt in the fact that Afrikans are beautiful in our own right rather than at the expense of any other ethnic group. And in the true spirit of the Swahili word, "harambee," we promote the idea that cultural exchange is germane to human growth.

Editorial

For nearly a month now, the African community in north Omaha has been in the midst of political fireworks, sparked by the candidacy of Paul Bryant Jr. for the city council seat presently held by Fred Conley. Both men are African and are running out of the overwhelmingly African 2nd district. But even though it is his seat that is being contested, Fred Conley doesn't seem to be more than a secondary figure in the fray. Rather, as things have unfolded, the primary combatants we see out front are Bryant and Ernie Chambers, who, for nearly twenty years, has been the only African member of the Nebraska legislature.

Based on numerous media interviews, press conferences, etc. over the past couple of weeks, we get the following picture of what has transpired to bring the controversy about.

First, Paul Bryant, considering the possibility of running against Fred Conley for his council position, sought out Ernie Chambers for advice and counsel. In the course of an early one of several conversations, Ernie asked the young political aspirant if there was anything in his past which could, if brought to the public's attention, serve to embarrass or discredit him. Paul told Ernie that he had smoked marijuana while in college.

Second, information came to Chambers that Bryant had had a more serious involvement in drugs than merely the smoking of weed. Chambers pressed Bryant about this information and, bit at a time, received confirmation from him that he had both smoked and sold marijuana and that he had had some involvement with cocaine.

Third, it became evident that Paul Bryant, Jr. was receiving substantial support from persons outside the African community--more concretely, from Caucasian businessmen. Having become aware of this, Ernie became suspicious of Paul's motives, as well as his allegiances. He urged him to withdraw from

the race(He had earlier encouraged him to go public with regard his past history of drug involvement).

Since then, a significant number of African persons and groups have formed battle lines, with John Foster of Mad Dads(a formation of predominantly African men whose stated objective is to rid Omaha of drug peddling and use and gang violence), for example, giving public support to Paul Bryant and Terry Thompson of the Brotherhood of Midwest Guardians(an organization of African members of the Omaha Police Dept. which has been boldly critical of racism in that department and the violent practice of that racism against members of Omaha's African population) expressing public opposition to him and support for Chambers' position that Bryant is both deceitful and a representative of the interests of certain Caucasian businesses.

There are others who have become prominent in this controversy--Ben Gray, for one, the host of ch. 7's public affairs program, "Kaleidoscope," who featured an interview with Chambers on a recent program in which Chambers recounted the various visits he'd had with Bryant and explained his view that Bryant is being used by those who do not have the interests of African people at heart. Ben has stated that he has been trying to get Bryant to grant him an interview but has been unsuccessful. In the meantime, Ernie Chambers, Terry Thompson, and Ben Gray have been characterized by Bryant and some of his supporters as forming a conspiracy to hinder his campaign, through the use of political blackmail, intimidation, etc.

There is a tragedy in all this. But it is not that there is some turmoil in Omaha's 2nd district but that, in the race between Conley and Bryant, there is not a candidate who either has an Afrocentric perspective or who has an understanding of the political dynamics which confront an African

office-holder in a situation where he or she is both a minority in a Caucasian-dominated governing body and a representative of an African population that is a small minority in a Caucasian-dominated city.

In the nearly ten years that Fred Conley has been on the Omaha City Council, he has brought practically nothing into the 2nd district, in the way of job opportunities, housing improvement, etc. However, only a small portion of the blame for this falls on his shoulders. He is, afterall, only one person, operating in a theatre of racism and utter absence of concern on the part of the political and business establishments for the needs of the poor in general and of African and other people of color in particular. But Conley could have done more had he understood - as do Ernie Chambers of Omaha and Michael McGee of Milwaukee, for example - that that his own minority status and that of the community which he represents demands an aggressive, and sometimes confrontational, posture. Moreover, it is such a posture that attracts the support of the office-holder's constituency. Poor people, every-day folks, want to be able to look upon their political representatives as fighters. When they are represented by such fighters, they are more inclined to show support for them than for representatives whom they view as being no more than frightened rabbits among wolves, at best, or, at worst, wolves in something like rabbit clothing.

Paul Bryant, Jr. does not appear to offer Omaha's African community more in the way of decent representation than the man he seeks to defeat. Having not held political office before, he does not have an official record we can examine. However, he has had several appearances on television and been before the public otherwise. What he has projected is the same naive faith in "the system" and "I'm-not-really-black-I-represent-all-the-people" attitude of his opponent. In addition to this, it

does appear that he was deceitful about his past involvement with drugs and it is obvious that he has substantial backing from Caucasian business people.

The problem with respect to the drug issue is not that he used drugs in the past, or even that he sold them(though this is a much more serious matter), As we well know, Malcolm was involved in drug-peddling, pimping, and other destructive activity before he raised himself up from the depths of such madness. The problem is that Paul Bryant was unable and/or unwilling to be honest about his past. Such honesty is owed to African people by Africans who aspire to represent and/or lead us.

Insofar as the matter of Bryant's backing from members of the Caucasian business establishment is concerned, the question that must be asked is why would these businessmen, who do not live in the 2nd district, give financial and other backing to Bryant? Would it be because Paul is just a terribly personable fellow? Businessmen do not operate out of such motives. They support politicians and/or political aspirants because they believe these beneficiaries of their money will serve their business interests. Anytime an African politician or political aspirant claims to represent or want to represent us and has substantial backing from Caucasians, we are supposed to be suspicious. Afterall, those folks who pay the band do call the tune.

What is needed is for African people in Omaha's 2nd district to "draft" an African person who understands the dynamics of racism and politics, is dedicated to African people first, and who is willing and able to be an advocate for his constituents' interests. This African man or woman should be given all the support the community can muster so that the Omaha City Council can have what the State Legislature has--a conscious and courageous African advocate for African people.

FLAME Editorial Policy

The HARAMBEE FLAME, the monthly publication of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(parent chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, Inc.), is a pan-Africanist newsletter. The FLAME's priority, with respect to news and views, is African people, events and developments which affect us and are, or should be, of concern to us. The FLAME does not recognize any distinctions between African people based solely on place of birth. References in the FLAME to African people are made on the basis of our common ancestry. An exception to this is the reprinting of articles, or excerpts thereof, from other publications, in which cases we do not alter "black" or other terms designating African people. This is our practice because we do not wish to diminish the integrity and authenticity of the articles we excerpt from.

Articles contained in the FLAME do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization unless they are accompanied by a statement identifying the views as those of the organization. Generally speaking, all unsigned articles are by the editor, Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa(p.k.a. D. Rice).

We encourage you to submit articles to the FLAME. Please enclose with your submission a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should not exceed 1200 words, though longer pieces will not be automatically rejected. Short stories are subject to the same restriction with respect to length. We also welcome poetry and graphics. We are looking for poems which address African folks' lives, the conditions we face, and our struggles to rise above those things which hinder us. Submitted poems should not sacrifice power and beauty for the sake of uniform rhythm and/or rhyme. Send submissions to the editor c/o HARAMBEE FLAME; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE; 68502-0500.

From Other Sources

Africans In U.S. Military Facing Racism In Desert

"An African-American soldier who returned to the U.S. last December after serving four months in Saudi Arabia says religious intolerance and racism is corroding the relationship between black and white troops in the Persian Gulf military theatre.

"Lance Waters, an Army mechanic with six years of service, claims racial tensions within the ranks are heating up because of blacks' rising militance and the military's increasingly intrusive attempts to squash it. Disillusionment with the Bush administration's anti-civil-rights attitude is also fueling African-American discontent with the service status quo.

Waters is also a practicing Moslem. He says his personal experience is emblematic of the armed forces' greater problem. After his August arrival in Saudi Arabia, he was ridiculed and derided both for his religious beliefs...and his outspoken racial views.

"'The atmosphere out there is one of sheer savagery', Waters says. 'Everywhere you look, you see signs like KILL EM ALL and GOD SORT EM OUT and WE CAME THOUSANDS OF MILES TO SMOKE A CAMEL JOCKEY and those kinds of things. Most of the white troops call Iraqis and even the Arabs who are our allies SAND NIGGERS, and they don't bother to hold their tongues in the presence of black soldiers...

"Waters was surprised by the level of awareness among the black troops deployed in the Persian Gulf. 'Just about every night, a bunch of us would get together and talk about the hypocrisy of this country that had sent us over to fight to

restore democracy in the rich kingdom of Kuwait while we didn't even enjoy full democratic rights at home', he says. 'We talked about how much the Arabs of that region looked like people we knew in black communities back home, and how the U.S. was using us to fight other black people for the benefit of white people...'"

...

-from "Religious Bullying, Racism Corrode Troop Relations," which appears on page 7 of the Feb. 20-26 IN THESE TIMES(Chicago, ILL)

African In N.Y. Overwhelmingly Oppose Gulf War

"Less than 10 percent of African-Americans in New York support the United States in its war with Iraq, according to the results of an opinion poll conducted this week by the Committee to Eliminate Media Offensive to African People in collaboration with the AMSTERDAM NEWS.

"A random sample of 100 responses of the 800 African-Americans surveyed shows that 89 percent are opposed to Operation Desert Storm...

"According to the sample group, 80 percent of African-Americans want Bush to end the war and bring the soldiers home now and 98 percent say they are disturbed by the high percentage of African-American ground troops now deployed in the Persian Gulf...

"Asked whether they believed racism to be a factor in the disproportionate number of African-Americans now assigned to the Gulf War, 93 percent said yes...

"Only 10 percent of African-Americans said they believed the well publicized messages of patriotism being sent back by African-Americans in the armed forces accurately reflects the feeling of the majority of the troops..."

-from "Poll Shows Overwhelming Anti-War Feelings In Black Community," which appears on page 3 of the Feb. 9 THE N.Y. AMSTERDAM NEWS

U.S./So. Africa: Economic And Military Parallels

"...The armed forces in the United States, like the police in South Africa, are one of the few exits for Blacks from economic hardship. The number of Blacks in the armed services of the United States is roughly the same as the number in prison. The Sentencing Project in Washington estimates that 454,724 Black men are incarcerated in the United States. According to the Defense Department there were 420,000 Blacks, most of them men, on active duty as of December 1991. In South Africa there have been major efforts by the South African army to recruit Blacks. Slightly more than one-third of South Africa's police force is black..."

-from "Economy Offers Few Exits From Poverty," which appears on page 8 of the Feb. 20 THE GUARDIAN(N.Y.)

Group Seeks To Bring Malcolm's Ideas To Life

"...The Black Consciousness Movement(in N.Y.), recognizing human rights leader Malcolm X as the true architect of the modern-day Black Liberation struggle, has staged an international campaign to save the Audubon Ballroom, the site of Malcolm X's 1965 assassination...

"The Black Consciousness Movement has engaged the help of college students and other youths internationally who recognize Malcolm X as the foremost advocate for Black Liberation.

"In addition to raising mass consciousness around the Audubon issue, the young people are

primary members of the African-American Coalition Against U.S. Intervention...

"Among the everyday tactics employed by the Movement to raise consciousness among the City's Black and Latino youth are lecture series featuring strategists and tactitions with a history of working with the liberation struggle; intimate group meetings to engage in philosophical exchange with other youth; rallies in major shopping districts and/or gathering places; demonstrations; group study sessions; and various cultural programs showcasing the talents of grassroots performers.

"According to Alkamal, a 25-year-old member of the group, the Black Consciousness Movement exists 'to provide a viable alternative to young people frustrated with the drug culture and the all-engulfing materialism that dominates the lives of youth today...'"

-from "Black Youth Reclaim Malcolm's Legacy," which appears on page 5 of the Jan. ARM THE MASSES(N.Y.). This is the first edition of this publication.

Zimbabwe Addresses Land Redistribution Issue

"Parliament has passed legislation empowering it to seize the land of white farmers and pay whatever compensation it deems reasonable. The idea is to have enough land to go around some of the millions of peasants in the country...

"As soon as President Robert Mugabe appends his signature to the bill, the government will be in a position to confiscate land and pay whatever compensation it chooses, although the law says such a compensation must be 'fair'. Under the law, the farmer has no right of appeal...

"The government plans to resettle some 110,000

peasant farmers on about 5m hectares of white-owned land. The bulk of it is in the fertile belt in the north-east where maize and tobacco are grown."

-from "Zimbabwe: Easing Land Confiscation," which appears on page 5 of the Dec. 20-Jan. 2 NIGERIA HOMENEWS(London, England)

Continent-Wide Telephone Link-Up In Africa Planned

"The Federal Ministry of Communication(in Nigeria) is seriously working on a plan to link Nigeria with other African nations through direct telephone conversation...

"It is expected that the blueprint would bring about the African equivalent of the single European telecommunications market and ensure sourcing of future telecommunication systems suitable to the tropical climate from a common market.

"Presently, telephone calls emerging from one African country to another have to pass through Europe before returning to the continent. The much talked about blueprint would change this trend as there would be provision for satellite, optical, microwave and digital transmission within the continent."

-from "Plan For Direct Inter-Africa Phone Links," which appears on page 12 of the Jan. 31-Feb. 6 NIGERIA HOMENEWS

Pan-Africanist Congress Rejects African National Congress Proposal For All-Party Convention

"The 'radical' Pan-Africanist Congress(PAC) has turned down a proposal by the rival African National Congress(ANC) for an all-party congress which

will open the way to a negotiated settlement of the apartheid question.

"The ANC had made the proposal in a policy statement on January 8...

"But a statement by Barney Desai, PAC secretary for information, said that the ANC's proposal was a 'not too clever attempt to substitute an elected and mandated constituent assembly with an all-party cabal'.

"The statement went on:...'The ANC's proposal means power-sharing, which we emphatically reject. We will not be the co-managers of apartheid'.

"Azapo had earlier rejected the ANC's proposal, saying it was 'motivated by factors external to the ranks of our people'. It suggested that the idea for an all-party congress had come from President F.W. deKlerk.

"All three organisations, however, agree that South Africa's new constitution should be drafted by a constituent assembly elected on the basis of one person, one vote."

-from "South Africa: PAC Shuns ANC," which appears on page 4 of the Jan. 31-Feb. 6 NIGERIA HOMENEWS

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Community News

On Sunday, February 24th, the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization at the Nebraska State Penitentiary held its annual African History program. The program began with pouring of libation in honor of our ancestors, recitation of the organization's creed and the nguzo saba(seven principles), and welcoming of our members and guests. Brief historical presentations were given by organization members Rodney Freeman, Shafik, and John Williams Bey. Two poetry readings were delivered, one by Mondo and the other by Frank Chipasula, an exile from Malawi who is on the staff of the University of Nebraska at Omaha Black Studies Dept.

The main address was delivered by Ben Gray, host of the television public affairs program, "Kaleidoscope." Ben addressed the the theme of the program, "quality of leadership." In so doing, he spoke of Malcolm and other men and women who have provided quality leadership to African people and gave a review of what had transpired in relation to the Bryant controversy covered earlier in this edition.

Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization member, Theodore Brown did a fine solo performance of "Lift Every Voice And Sing." And there was an exhibit of African-oriented paintings and drawings, most of them by members.

Though the turnout from the outside was low, the membership was especially pleased with the number of Brothers and Sisters from countries in Africa who attended. Following the formal part of the program, members and guests greased on some pastries, listened to contemporary music from Africa, and talked each others' ears off.

INTERVIEW

On the Friday, March 1st edition of "African Horizons," a weekly program on KZUM Radio in Lincoln, the host, Makoala Marake gave a very stirring commentary on the state of relations between African students from Africa and African students from the U.S. on the University of Nebraska at Lincoln campus and made an appeal for both groups to come together. Makoala is an officer of the African Students Association, which is comprised of African students from various nations in Africa. There is another organization on the U.N.L. campus which is comprised of African students, the African Peoples Union, the members of which are from the Omaha-Lincoln area and from other parts of the U.S.

On March 6th, we spoke with Brother Marake about the matter of relations between American-born Africans and Africans from home(Africa) on campus. Makoala characterized the situation as one in which there is an air of passivity between the two groups and in which the the two groups seem to avoid each other.

We asked Makoala why he thinks this situation is as he describes it. He responded, "I think there is an inherent misunderstanding between the two groups. It is very unusual to find Africans from America and Africans from Africa talking together."

We asked what he sees as being behind this misunderstanding and lack of contact. He cited the acceptance on the parts of both groups of stereotypes created by media and other forces, differences in the accents with which members of the two groups speak, and differences in speaking style. He said that African students from Africa often feel that they are looked upon by their Sisters and Brothers from here as being unique or separate from them.

We will conduct a more extensive interview with Makoala and present it in the next edition of the

FLAME. At this point, however, let us consider the question of the responsibility of U.S.-born Africans to bridge this gap between ourselves and our Sisters and Brothers from home. Who are we in relation to Africans who come here to the U.S. from the various nations of Africa? We are hosts and, to the degree that we were born and live in the U.S., this is our house. It is always the responsibility of a host to offer hospitality to a guest, to make the guest feel welcome and comfortable. In other words, as hosts, we Africans of U.S. birth must accept the responsibility for initiating contact with our Sisters and Brothers from home and enabling them to feel that they are with family.

We have to understand that our long separation from our ancestral home has altered our collective sensibilities, changed many of our values and attitudes, and caused us to lose sight of the fact that we and Africans in Africa are the same people. We should know that it is important for us to study the history, cultures, geography, etc. of the African continent so that we initiate our contacts with our African-born Sisters and Brothers with some level of awareness of who they are and, indeed, who we are.

We have to be sincere enough in our encounters with our Sisters and Brothers from home to ask them straightforward questions about aspects of their demeanor which we may be unfamiliar with or which may even cause us some degree of discomfort. We must do whatever we must do in order to be the kinds of hosts to our guests that we would want to be welcomed by were we to be visiting Africa. -Editor

Back In Time

Kuseila...continued to rule Mauritania for five years, but in 688 was defeated and killed by a new contingent of Arab troops. His position as leader of African resistance was assumed by Queen Dahia-al Kahina. Under her leadership the Africans fought back fiercely and drove the Arab army northward into Tripolitania...

After the Arab general, Hassan-ben-Numan, captured Carthage in 698, his victory proved to be short-lived. Queen Kahina soon rallied her forces and drove him from her capital. When Kahina's position became desperat she ordered that the fertile districts be laid waste so that the lack of food and shelter would discourage the Arabs from returning...

Queen Kahina was of the Hebrew faith and she never abandoned her religion. Her opposition, then, was purely nationalistic, since she favored neither the Christians nor the Muslims. She was finally defeated and slain by Hassan-ben-Numan in 705. Her death ended one of the most valiant attempts to save Africa for the Africans.

Source: "Black World," Feb., 1975. We thank Sista X of the African Student Congress in Philadelphia for submitting this material.

Announcements

A Call For New "Black" Visions" - Third World Press is producing an anthology of Black visionary literature. We are looking for Afrocentric writers who are exploring the activist role of fiction, and using it as a tool for Black liberation. The anthology will illuminate new solutions to historical problems in the Black community. The focus of the anthology is Black empowerment, which is illustrated in the Nguzo Saba principles(the senen principles of Blackness): Umoja(Unity), Kujichagulia(Self-determination), Ujima(Collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa(Cooperative economics), Nia(Purpose), Kuumba(Creativity), Imani(Faith). We welcome creative writing in all genres including: poetry, prose, short stories, plays and folklore. Works should not exceed five pages. Send works to:

Black Visions Anthology
Third World Press
7524 Cottage Grove
Chicago, IL 60619

Deadline is May 5, 1991.

Books by local Africans - Selected articles from Dr. Walter Gill's "Up Through Education" column in the OMAHA STAR are now being published in THE GILLED CAGE, a collection of 36 essays addressing educational issues and trends that will impact on African Americans in the 1990s. Copies may be ordered through Winston-Derek Publishers, Inc.; P.O. Box 90883; Nashville, Tennessee; 37209; Tel. No. 1-800-826-1888. THE BLACK EXPERIENCE IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA is by Daniel Boamah-Wiafe. It addresses several issues: African roots and heritage, religions and belief systems, the drive to achieve economic independence, and many others. The book is available through Wisdom Publications; P.O. Box 4711; Omaha, NE; 68104.

ISIS PAPERS PUBLISHED - The long-awaited collection of essays, THE ISIS PAPERS: THE KEYS TO THE COLORS, by Dr. Frances Cress-Welsing has been published by Third World Press of Chicago. You must read this book, if you are at all interested in understanding racism, its causes and effects. This work may be among the most thought-provoking ever written on racism and related issues. The following is reprinted from a Third World Press news release.

"A third generation physician specializing in general and child psychiatry, Dr. Francis Cress Welsing is well qualified...THE ISIS PAPERS: THE KEYS TO THE COLORS is the culmination of more than 20 years of research and analysis based in part on the treatment of African Americans in her private practice. Cress Welsing provides theories regarding white world supremacy and focuses on the difficulties African Americans experience while trying to survive in a system dominated by European Americans...

"Chapter after chapter discloses fascinating insights on topics such as: the relationship between Black children and their parents; rape; AIDS and its threat to Black Americans; and the crisis in Black male and female relationships. Her unraveling of the network of fears embedded in such European symbols and practices as ball games, money, gold, guns and even the white Christ-figure, will force readers of all colors to examine their own participation in a system of racial violence and negation..." -Third World Press